CAN DOGS GUIDES BE HOME
TRAINED?

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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

ABC quoted?' And you say, 'Well, it's 1-7/8. I have no bid at the moment.' And he'll say, 'I have a bid. I want to buy stock at 7/8 or a dollar.' Miss Knack puts it down on the card, and if I buy any stock at three quarters, I'll call this guy up and say, 'I can offer you so many shares at three quarters. Have you any interest?' He may buy it."

Would you like to become a stockbroker? Ben thinks it might be too difficult for a newcomer without sight.

"I suppose it would be possible for a blind person to go into this business cold if they were associated with somebody who was willing to devote all their time to aiding the blind person, but I think it would be very difficult. One of my greatest hurdles, after becoming blind, was being able to remember statistics--looking up how a company is doing--to see the annual report.

"Before I became blind, I would read these things, and then if I wanted to know how a company was doing, I'd get it out and read it over again. I have gotten to the point where I can remember a good many of these things after the first reading. If time lapses six or seven months after I've read it, then I would have to get it out, but once Miss Knack goes over these things with me (she knows exactly what I want before I even ask for it) I can remember the thing for several weeks, and if I own any of the securities myself, I can probably remember it for a longer time. But that was very difficult to do in the beginning. If I were going into a business now, I think I'd hesitate going into securities."

Since Ben Lichstenstein is 75 years old, some people might think he'd be looking forward to retirement--far away from those jangling telephones. Ben is emphatic about this.

"I hope I drop dead here at the office some day when Miss Knack is out of the room. I've had so many friends who, at the age of 65, were alert and interesting. They retire, and within four or five years, they're zombies. They have no interests. They don't know what to do with their time. I think it's a terrible mistake."

That's the unlisted securities business. It seems to be hard to get into and equally hard to get out of. ***

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Reading Time: 9 minutes.

Dr. Robert M. Lambert and his wife, Irene, from Montreal, Quebec, Canada, trained their own dog guides and believe blind persons choosing to do this should not be penalized. Dr. Lambert explained.

"I mean the term 'penalty' in its broadest sense. First, I think, obviously, he should be subject to no legal penalty. All of the rights that attend the owner of a dog guide received from a school should attend him.

"I mean the term 'penalty' in the social sense. I think a person who trains his own dog guide should, under reasonable conditions, be subject to no abusive disdain or scorn on the part of dog guide schools, agencies that serve the blind, or clients of dog guide schools. For in my judgment, to visit scorn upon such a person is to defy the sense of the term 'service'. No agency can defy the client's sense of confidence in his dog and claim to serve."

Dr. Lambert has used home-trained dog guides since 1957, when he trained his first dog, Trudy.

"Early in her training when I had her just about a year, Trudy made the rounds of all the cities, zigzagging the course from Miami to Boston, including places such as Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Atlanta, Raleigh, Durham. We've been magnificently pleased with Trudy and I think it was a singular testament to the value of Trudy that after her death...I finally decided I would go the route of a second dog guide for myself."

He obtained Lambda in 1966.

"Lambda has also worked in many big cities. She was trained in Philadelphia, has worked in New York, Montreal, Washington, Toronto, Ottawa, and her range of experiences and successes has been as wide as has Trudy's."

Mrs. Lambert's dog guide, Corey, is Lambda's sister, and according to Mrs. Lambert, serves equally well. She discussed a trip to Winnipeg.

"We flew on five different airlines on that trip, stopping at cities like Toronto, Buffalo, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Winnipeg, where we worked the dogs in at least four of those cities for the first time. They worked magnificently well.

"We've taken long-trip Greyhound bus rides from Philadelphia to the Laurentians north of Montreal with our three children and the two dogs, and my husband and I al-

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ways sit side by side in a Greyhound bus with the dogs at our feet. They love those long trips and are no problem whatsoever."

But why train your own dog when there are schools available? According to Dr. Lambert, there are three major reasons.

"For one thing, it is reasonably well known that there are a good number of contemporary German Shepherds who, by virtue of excessive inbreeding, have been ... troubled with lots of physical and psychological difficulties. ...We find that this combination of probably strictly adverse characteristics, together with the predominance of the German Shepherd, though by no means a total domination of the dog guide field, has led the schools to produce a good number of dogs whose quality we frankly found suspect.

"Second point...has to do with the institutional character of the training process. ...The first dog to be received by a dog owner from a dog guide school requires him to take approximately four weeks of his life and absent himself from his family. If he happens to be a working person, he is required to absent himself from his job. ...The fact is that in some obvious tangible sense he is incarcerated. His behavior is dictated by institutional policy. His comings and goings are monitored in a highly custodial way and while this may be argued as the result of the institution's desire to benefit him, it nonetheless may very well visit a very serious social and economic constraint on ... (him).

"The third reason, I think, is a lot more significant. ...It has to do with the manner in which the dog guide school ...socializes the blind person who receives the dog. ...For us, the liberation of the blind from the bondage of Biblical tradition means essentially that the pursuit of all aspects of life from the social and economic to the physical and recreative are the blind person's inherent right. ... We think it imprudent and damaging to the whole effort to liberate the blind as a collective, that the dog guide schools nurture in the blind this concept of mobility as a privilege rather than a right."

Dr. Lambert does not recommend that every blind person train his own dog, and does not think dog guide schools should be deserted. But, he would like schools to improve their services.

"We don't think that the dog guide schools have failed to render a significant service. We think only that they have become complacent...and were it the case that they had become complacent only with respect to the public, it would bother me less. What disturbs me more is that they have become complacent with respect to the client."

Only two things are important when a blind person functions with his dog, according to Dr. Lambert.

"One, the extent to which the dog functions to enhance the efficiency and safety of that blind person and enables him to be confident of the enhancement that that dog brings to his efficiency and safety; and two, the blind person's exercise of responsible prudence in the use and care for his dog guide both at home and in public."

How can one be sure his dog qualifies as a guide if it isn't from a school? Dr. Lambert believes there is a way.

"It would not be impossible for dog guide users, in collaboration with some or all of the dog guide training schools, ...state departments of safety, ...and veterinary councils of various sorts, to set up uniform state criteria for the certification and licensing of dog guides...

"Under these conditions, we would accomplish a variety of things. First, incompetent persons who trained their own dog guides would not be allowed to function with them. Secondly, incompetent schools who have trained unsatisfactory dogs would not be allowed the luxury of a public relations success to which they had not been entitled with their dogs. And thirdly, good dogs, whether trained by the schools or trained by their owners, would function in a manner in which they were intended to function, enhancing the safety and efficiency of their owners and assuring the public that their owners cared for them well and functioned with them happily."

(Editor's Note: Dr. Lambert is a professor of mathematical psychology at Loyola College, in Montreal. He received his Ph.D. Degree and Mrs. Lambert, a baccalaureate in political science from University of Pennsylvania in 1970. End of note.) ***

THE STIGMA OF UNORDERED MERCHANDISE

A Free-Lance Article by Harold Rowley, Battle Creek, Michigan

Reading Time: 15 minutes.

Beyond the charges and countercharges, two facts stand out: (1) everyone has

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